Public Document No. 81

MASSACHUSETTS COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND.

TENTH ANNUAL REPORT.

FOR THE YEAR ENDED NOV. 30, 1916.

BOSTON:
WRIGHT & POTTER PRINTING CO., STATE PRINTERS,
32 DERNE STREET.
1917.

HV1796
M39

Products of Willow-ware Shop.

(Reprinted by permission from "The House Beautiful," December, 1916.)

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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Commission for the Blind.

James P. Munroe of Boston, *Chairman*, . . . Term ends 1917.
Miss Annette P. Rogers of Boston, ... Term ends 1919.
Mrs. William W. Taff of Brookline, ... Term ends 1920.
Walter B. Snow of Watertown, *Secretary*, . . . Term ends 1921.
Edward E. Allen of Watertown, ... Term ends 1918.

Regular meetings of the Commission are held on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month, at 3 Park Street, Boston.

Telephone, Haymarket 831.

Private branch exchanges connecting central office and the Cambridge workshops, listed under Massachusetts Commission for the Blind. Office, Haymarket 831, and Industries, Cambridge 5753.

Agents.

Lucy Wright, *General Superintendent.*
Charles W. Holmes,[1] *Superintendent of Training and Employment for Men.*
Lotta S. Rand, *Superintendent of Training and Employment for Women.*
Henry Copley Greene, *Field Worker for Conservation of Eyesight.*
Brenda F. Mattice,[2] *Field Worker.*
Ellen C. Yancey, *Field Worker (supervising).*
Florence W. Birchard,[3] *Field Worker.*
Edith R. Gale, *Field Worker.*
Ida E. Ridgeway,[4] *Field Worker.*
James T. Cole, *Superintendent of Cambridge Rug Shop and "Wundermop" Shop.*
H. Frances Lewis, *Manager, Woolson House Industries.*
George S. Mansfield, *Sales Agent.*
Helen F. O'Leary, *Accountant.*

[1] Blind or partially blind workers.
[2] On leave of absence, from Nov. 1, 1914.
[3] Part-time worker.
[4] Full-time worker; half of salary paid by Perkins Institution.

I. Central Office.

The central office is located at 3 Park Street, Boston.

Applications may be made at the central office: (1) for information in regard to the various general and special agencies already organized which may be utilized for the benefit of the blind; (2) for home teachers' instruction; (3) for employment; (4) for educational and industrial aid; (5) for the sale of products; (6) for the co-operation in care of children's cases not already provided for by the Nursery for Blind Babies and the Perkins Institution; and (7) for information and co-operation in nonmedical work for prevention of blindness and conservation of eyesight.

II. Employment.

There are three general divisions into which the possibilities of employment of the blind naturally fall: (1) among the seeing, either along professional lines, in offices, in shops or otherwise; (2) in shops for the blind; (3) in home industries or individual occupations.

Applications for employment will be carefully considered and every effort made to secure suitable work for the applicant. In the first case, personal effort of one of the Commission's representatives will be made on behalf of the applicant. In the second, a position will be secured when possible in some workshop for the blind. In the third, suitable training may be provided by the Commission, at its discretion and under such conditions as it shall determine. (See "Shop Schools and Industrial Classes.")

III. Salesroom for Home and Shop Products of Blind Labor, 3 Park Street, Boston.

All articles made in the home must be submitted for inspection and must come up to reasonable standards as regards style and workmanship. Original applications for the consignment of home work should be made at the Commission's office.

Florence Cummings, *Agent.*

IV. Cambridge Industries.

James T. Cole, *Superintendent.*

Cambridge Rug and "Wundermop" Shop, 686 Massachusetts Avenue, (Central Square).

Hubert Durdle, *Manager.*
Helen F. Morton, *Head Clerk.*
K. R. Smith,[1] *Foreman, Mop Shop.*
John Pendergast,[1] *Mop Agent.*

[1] Blind or partially blind workers.

Broom and Basket Shop, 13 Brookline Street, Cambridge.

A. L. Curado, *Manager.*
L. W. Kilbourn,[1] *Clerk.*
Marie H. Manseau, *Clerk.*
Michael E. Mitchell, *Foreman, Broom Shop.*
William A. Wojcik, *Foreman, Basket Shop.*
Edwin D. Stickney,[1] *Canvasser.*

V. Woolson House Industries.

Woolson House Industries for Women, 277 Harvard Street (corner of Inman). Hand-weaving, chair reseating, etc.

H. Frances Lewis, *Manager.*
Mary E. Bannister,[2] *Assistant.*

VI. "M. C. B." Shops.

Charles W. Holmes,[1] *Superintendent.*

Pittsfield. — 30 Eagle Street.

Henry Wills,[1] *Managing Foreman.*
Nelson A. Foot, *Clerical Assistant.*

Lowell. — 159 Moody Street.

J. Victor Carey, *Manager.*
Henry G. Burke,[1] *Foreman.*

Worcester. — 194 Front Street.

M. D. Fitzgerald, *Manager.*
Daniel Scott,[1] *Foreman.*

Fall River. — 28 Borden Street.

Joseph A. Dennis, *Manager.*
Lawrence P. Mannix, [1] *Foreman.*

Mattress making, chair reseating and broom making are the chief industries of these five shops, which employ only men.

---

[1] Blind or partially blind workers.
[2] Resigned July 1, 1916.

VII. Shop Schools and Industrial Classes.

Instruction in chair seating and mattress making is given to a limited number of pupils, with a view to home or shop employment in these industries; also in rug, mop, broom making, willow-ware making and in art fabric weaving, as vacancies occur in the various workshops and as the business expands.

VIII. State Home Teachers.

John Vars.[1]
Lillian R. Garside.[1]
Edward Schuerer.[1]
Mary E. Roberts.[1,2]
Mary F. Grieve.[1,2]

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[1] Blind or partially blind workers.
[2] Part-time workers.

REPORT.

To His Excellency the Governor and the Honorable the Members of the Council.

GENTLEMEN: — The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind begs leave to submit the following report covering the fiscal year ended Nov. 30, 1916.

ESTIMATES FOR 1916–17.

It has been the practice of the Commission since its establishment to keep its accounts in great detail. Each year it is able, therefore, to make very close estimates of its needed outlay for the ensuing year. Notwithstanding this, the Legislature, in each of the last three years, has seen fit to cut these careful minimum estimates by $5,000 a year, by the considerable total, that is, for this period of $15,000. As a result, the work for the blind has been hampered in many ways. Industries which should have expanded have remained stationary; blind men eager for employment are still on the waiting list; and undertakings which it is believed would have proved of great value to the work have had to be postponed.

The Commission therefore again respectfully emphasizes the fact that its estimates of this year are based, as heretofore, on actual conditions, and calls serious attention to the further fact that unless the full amount asked for (with the exception noted on page 10) is granted the industries will continue to be hampered, many blind will be kept from much-needed employment, and the progress of this work in which Massachusetts has been so conspicuous a leader will be seriously checked. The estimates submitted call for $6,700 for home teaching, $49,282 for maintenance of industries and $66,555 for general purposes.

ESTIMATES FOR HOME TEACHING.

The estimates for home teaching, which (see page 18) has been under the direction of this Board only since June 1, 1916, are based upon the experiences of the past year and, corrected

from $6,700 to $6,000, involve no change. It is obvious that the work needs extension; but the Commission believes that a longer period of developing this work in relation to that of the other departments is necessary before recommendations can be made satisfactorily, and in the interests of economy.

Estimates for Industries Appropriation.

The estimate for the maintenance of industries calls for $8,182 more than was asked for last year. The major part of this increase is imperatively needed simply to meet the demands of shop expansion, to keep the men and women steadily employed, and to obtain the very considerable financial advantage which comes from prompt discounting of bills. A part of the increase is called for, however, to enable us to employ a saleswoman whose business shall be to find markets for the output of blind men and women working in their own homes, and to provide for the purchase of the necessary materials to keep these home workers employed. The value of this service cannot be measured in dollars and cents, for there is involved in it the keeping of otherwise idle persons employed, and of changing, therefore, the whole atmosphere of their homes.

Estimates for General Appropriation.

The general expense estimate covers, as heretofore, the support of the central office (including the bureau of information and industrial aid, work for prevention of blindness and for persons with seriously defective sight, the register of blind persons and field work), as well as the expense of the shops at Pittsfield, Lowell, Worcester and Fall River. The estimates under this head are increased this year by two important items: $5,000 to provide for extension of industrial aid to blind persons working in competition with the sighted, and handicapped, of course, not only by blindness but also by the special expense of guidance; and a sum, originally named at over $17,000, for providing a center for industrial training and, possibly, an industrial home for blind men. Since filing the estimates the Commission has decided to put its immediate effort into the solution of certain questions fundamental to work

for the blind, the solving of which, it believes, should precede any final decision as to an industrial home. This decision has been reached after careful conference with experienced workers from various States who agree that plans for an industrial home should await (1) the settlement of the question of comprehensive relief for the needy blind, and (2) convincing proof that special training for blind men cannot be provided by other and better means. In pursuance of the latter plan the Commission will, when heard by the ways and means committee, present a plan calling for a smaller sum than $17,000 for trying out alternative plans for the training of blind men.

PROPOSED LEGISLATION.

In the direction of comprehensive relief, the Commission has submitted to the Legislature a bill providing special outdoor aid, without pauperization, to blind individuals or to families in which there are one or more blind.

The plan outlined in this bill has the value of making use of existing means for investigation, disbursement and follow-up, and for general supervision. Under this bill the Commission for the Blind would first make investigation and recommendation as to the special needs of blind people, the overseers of the poor would disburse and follow up in their own communities, and the State Board of Charity would supervise. The bill furthermore provides that outdoor aid for the blind shall be provided entirely by special State appropriation, and that it shall be nonpauperizing. The bill is as follows: —

AN ACT TO PROVIDE SPECIAL OUTDOOR AID TO BLIND INDIVIDUALS OR FAMILIES IN WHICH THERE ARE ONE OR MORE BLIND PERSONS.

SECTION 1. In every city and town the overseers of the poor shall, subject to the subsequent provisions of this act, aid such blind persons, or families in which there are one or more blind persons, as are recommended to them for special outdoor aid by the Massachusetts commission for the blind, and, with their co-operation, in such a manner and to such an extent as is recommended. In the case of all new applications from blind persons or families in which there are one or more blind persons, the overseers of the poor shall refer them to the Massachusetts commission for the blind for investigation and possible recommendation for special aid. Nothing herein contained shall be construed to prevent overseers

from giving prompt and suitable temporary aid hereunder, pending compliance with the requirements of this section.

SECTION 2. The state board of charity, in like manner with all other cases aided by overseers of the poor of cities and towns, and under all laws relative to distribution of relief, shall have general supervision of the work done and measures taken by the overseers of the poor of the several cities and towns in respect of cases of blind individuals or families in which there are one or more blind persons, recommended for special aid, and for said purpose they may visit and inspect any and all families aided under this act and shall have access to any records and other data kept by the overseers of the poor or their representatives relating to such aid, and said board shall report to the governor and council upon the work done by their agents and by the overseers of the poor.

SECTION 3. In respect to aid to blind individuals or families in which there are one or more blind persons, recommended for special aid, the city or town rendering the aid shall be reimbursed by the commonwealth after the approval of such bills by the state board of charity for all outdoor aid to blind persons or families in which there are one or more blind persons.

SECTION 4. Blind individuals or families in which there are one or more blind persons, recommended for special aid by the commission for the blind, shall not be deemed to be paupers by reason of receiving aid as aforesaid.

SECTION 5. For the purpose of reimbursing the cities and towns, and to provide for a special agent or agents and other necessary expense on the part of the state board of charity and commission for the blind, there shall be appropriated from the treasury of the commonwealth the sum of for the operations of the first year.

SECTION 6. This act shall take effect upon the first day of October, nineteen hundred and seventeen.

The stand which it has always taken, as well as its published reports, make it clear that the Commission is warmly committed to securing for the blind the largest possible measure of industrial aid, as well as the most adequate relief. It believes, moreover, that both industrial aid and relief should be extended in such a way as to give the greatest freedom to the individual consistent with justice to him and to his neighbor. But it does not believe that industrial aid and relief can be successfully administered together. They are essentially different. Industrial aid is offered on the basis that the individual is able to help himself; relief (whether it be called direct aid or a pension) should obviously be limited to the individual who is practically unable to help himself, and one who needs such

relief usually needs a good deal more than money. The attempt to handle both questions in the same way would be unjust to the competent and the needy alike. It would only make more difficult the holding up of business standards for the able, — standards without which no permanent market for what the blind have to offer can be maintained. It would be inadequate for the needy, whose complications of illness or other troubles call for counsel and help along quite different lines.

Therefore the Commission has endeavored to meet both types of need by including in its regular estimates $5,000 for a beginning of extension of industrial aid to blind persons working alongside the sighted, and by putting in this bill for special aid providing relief for blind persons who are in need and who are able to contribute little or nothing to their own support.

These recommendations raise, the Commission realizes, many fundamental questions. It wishes, therefore, to make clear —

1. That the special aid bill, involving as it does several existing forms of organization, is subject to change should further conference seem to make changes necessary.

2. That understanding other recommendations aiming to meet the same need, but not known to the Commission at the time of drafting this bill, have been put before the General Court, the Commission holds itself open to conference and suggestion.

3. That, pending plans for possible radical changes in pensions or relief, — plans affecting the sighted as well as the blind population, and necessitating enlarged machinery for administration, — the Commission holds in suspension its final recommendations.

Whatever may be the final decision concerning methods of administration, details upon which the effectiveness of all relief measures so largely depend, the Commission wishes again to emphasize certain fundamental principles concerning the relief of the needy blind.

1. The condition of such blind persons is made worse rather than better unless the aid given them is administered by disinterested and experienced persons having insight and common sense.

2. A pension or other form of outdoor relief is wholly mischievous if it tends to relieve from responsibility those parents,

children, brothers or other relatives who are able to provide for the necessities of the blind individual.

3. Such aid should not be given except with full knowledge of what is already being done for the blind through outdoor relief, through special industrial aid, or through various means of subsidized employment.

As to the first point, a careful and expert administration of pensions or other forms of outdoor relief is necessary not simply to guard against impostors; it is needed far more in order that money given by the State may be supplemented by wise counsel as to its best expenditure, by that friendly sympathy so necessary to the aged and infirm, and by effective co-operation with other agencies, public and private, which are in a position to contribute also, in one way or another, to the bettering of the blind individual's condition.

As to the second point, State aid which tends to disintegrate the family or to diminish the sense of filial or fraternal responsibility does much more harm to society than it can possibly accomplish of good to the individual. Expert administration of such aid is needed, therefore, to determine in every case whether or not the State is assuming a responsibility which should be taken by the more or less immediate relatives of the blind individual.

As to the third point, blind persons needing assistance are being helped by State or local funds, and it was in order to determine how far the blind are already in receipt of public outdoor relief that the Commission last year introduced the bill authorizing the overseers and the State Board of Charity to report these facts to the Commission.

No provision of funds was made to aid this inquiry, but, through the courtesy of the Massachusetts Association for Promoting the Interests of the Blind, a worker has been provided for more than three months' service. As a result — though a few more figures may yet be brought in — it has been found that during the six months, June 1 to Dec. 1, 1916, 135 blind persons were in receipt of outdoor relief in Massachusetts. Other facts are given more in detail under "Special Reports" (see page 35). This is sufficient to demonstrate that in any general plan of State relief the aid already being given by the overseers of the poor should be taken into account.

Important conclusions from the above study, supplemented by the general experience of our agents, are —

1. That the overseers, even when they appreciate the fact that blindness may call for some special amount or form of aid, varying with individual cases, can scarcely be expected to have either the time or the experience to go into these variations. Their cordial interest in this inquiry, on the other hand, is an assurance that they would co-operate in any reasonable plan for bettering the condition of the blind, and for increasing the amount of their relief.

2. That there is a considerable number of persons who are either not eligible under existing interpretations of relief laws for public aid, or who would not accept it as now offered. Some of these have a small property or savings which they must sacrifice in order to be eligible for relief, and with others less fortunate would suffer under the social or technical stigma of pauperism. It is this largely unaided group, as well as that body of persons in receipt of some form of aid, whose needs have determined in large measure the form of the Commission's bill.

CENSUS OF THE NEEDY BLIND.[1]

During the past two years surprise has been expressed by various interested people that there is not available definite information as to the number of blind requiring pensions or relief. The need for this information has been so strongly felt by the Commission for the Blind that for three years it has appealed to the Legislature for authority and funds to pursue the necessary inquiry. (See 1914, House Bill No. 117; 1915, House Bill No. 45; 1916, chapter 160.) On the third appeal the Legislature gave the necessary authority, but provided no funds. This lack has been made up to a limited extent, as already stated, by the Association for the Blind, and the

[1] Number of blind in Massachusetts (minimum estimate in round numbers): under 20 years, 500; 20 to 60 years, 1,500; over 60 years, 2,000; total, 4,000. Maximum estimate based on 1905 census as checked and corrected, and figured according to percentage increase in general population: 11.4 per cent. under 20 years, 533; 36.8 per cent. 20 to 60 years, 1,721; 51.8 per cent. over 60 years, 2,423; total, 4,677. Both the minimum and maximum estimate are based on a statistical acquaintance with more than 8,000 blind, and personal acquaintance with 4,000 in the course of ten years. They represent close and careful estimates. Only a scientific inquiry through medical experts on the basis of technical definition could determine which is nearer the truth. Long acquaintance with the type of errors in census-taking by those unacquainted with the special topic, and other considerations, lead the general superintendent of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind to incline to the minimum rather than the maximum estimate.

results are referred to on the two preceding pages. Had the Legislature responded to the original request in 1914, helpful information would have been available to all interested persons two years ago.

It should be emphasized, however, that, even with this information available, it would not be possible, without a very large expenditure of funds, to give reliable estimates upon this very difficult economic question. Only by means of a house-to-house canvass throughout the State, simultaneous in every city and town, could all the blind be located, and only through follow-up visits by agents qualified to pass upon the degree of helplessness due to blindness, and upon the capacity of the family budget for supporting a dependent member, could information of any fair degree of accuracy be brought in.

This Commission does not believe such an expense warranted. The checked and corrected census of 1905 as reported in 1907 gave the necessary percentage basis for figuring the numbers of blind in the State in proportion to the population. Nothing has been brought forward in ten years' active experience of the Commission and other agencies for the blind to discredit that basis of calculation. The Commission believes that the amount of economic need can best be determined by constructive experimentation without further preliminary investigation; and if the bill recommended by this Board this year is put into effect the State will be in a position to measure and meet the economic needs of the blind case by case. According as the standard set for need is high or low, the numbers, on the one hand, will vary from a possible 500 to a possible 1,000. The pension plan, on the other hand, the Commission believes, basing that opinion upon the experience of other States, would involve numbers ranging from 2,000 to 4,000.

PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS AND CONSERVATION OF EYESIGHT.

This year has brought fresh evidence of the need of unremitting effort in the campaign against needless blindness. In the report of the agent for conservation of eyesight will be found reports of three cases of needless blindness from ophthalmia neonatorum which have occurred this year, to say

nothing of those children whose sight has been somewhat impaired from this disease. This is, as against one case last year, and four the year before, eight children in three years condemned to a life of blindness, with a minimum cost of special education to the State of $24,000. One of these cases is the most flagrant instance of neglect known to us in the course of ten years' work.

SIGHT-SAVING CLASSES.

An encouraging phase of the work for conservation of eyesight is presented in the sight-saving classes in the public schools, for children whose vision is so impaired, even with the aid of the best glasses obtainable, as to preclude their benefiting by the usual methods of education (see Special Reports, page 63). The opening of classes of this kind in Cambridge, New Bedford and Lynn and of a second class in the city of Boston, is a welcome sign of the recognition of this constructive educational possibility. The work of this year in this field has been divided between Mr. Henry Copley Greene, Field Agent for Conservation of Eyesight, who had leave of absence for six months, and Miss Florence M. Patterson, whom the Commission was so fortunate to secure as a substitute during his absence.

The year's study of vision records of 26,000 children has confirmed the results of previous studies as to the prevention possibilities of school-nursing and the practical need for sight-saving classes in our public schools. In this connection important questions of future supervision and support of such classes arise and are discussed in the special report (see page 63).

In discussing conservation of eyesight, the Commission wishes again to record its stand in relation to health insurance, believing as last year that "an adequate system of health insurance, by providing early and efficient medical care would also help to prevent the after effects of various general diseases to which much blindness is now due."

HOME TEACHING.

An entirely new responsibility in the field of education for adults has been added to the work of this Board in the transfer to it of State home teaching. While the possibilities of the development and extension of this work in relation to other departments and to local centers are many, the Commission thinks it best to familiarize itself with and to develop the work further before reporting in detail. The actual transfer dated as from June 1, 1916, allows a financial report for six months (see page 26). To this is added the following summary for the year ending November, 1915, compiled on the same basis as in previous years by Mr. Vars, superintendent under the previous form of organization: —

Home Teachers.

Statistical Report for Year ending Nov. 1, 1916.

Pupils' statistics: —	
Number of new cases visited,	139
Number accepting instruction,	114
Number declining instruction,	25
Number of old pupils returning for further help,	25
Number completing work,	88
Teachers' statistics: —	
Number of calls made during the year,	2,024
Number of lessons given,	2,570
Number of letters written,	567
Number of post cards written,	858
Number of miles traveled,	34,668
Number of hours given to preparation,	2,253
Number of hours devoted to teaching,	2,711
Number of hours taken up in travel,	4,238

EMPLOYMENT IN SUBSIDIZED SHOPS.

Cambridge Industries.

Rug and Mop Department.

The year has been a particularly fortunate one in that the men have been kept regularly employed, and the entire output has been sold through ordinary channels. A large percentage of the business has been through duplication of orders, keeping the cost of merchandising low.

One sighted boy has been replaced by a partial-sighted operative, and the result has been satisfactory. Undoubtedly another partial-sighted operative will be employed in the rug department in the near future.

Broom Department.

The removal of this department from Valentine Street to Brookline Street, noted in the last report, has proved very advantageous. In these improved quarters it has been found possible to systematize the work, to install a good deal of power machinery, and to reduce waste to a minimum. The business in corn brooms, despite the high cost of raw material, has so increased that the shop cannot keep up with orders; and already lack of space in a building which seemed ample for several years to come is proving a serious handicap.

A patented street broom which the Commission controls promises development in the near future. During the year it has been found that the waste product of a rattan factory can be employed in the manufacture of brooms, and that blind men can prepare it for use. The process involves cutting, sorting and baling, and at the present time four blind men are employed at this work, with orders ahead sufficient to keep them busy for the next five months.

Willow Department.

The willow shop has, in the past year, kept eight to ten men, for the most part, steadily on the pay roll. Sales have kept pace with production, so that at the present time there is not an undue amount of stock on hand. The prediction made last year, that this work would prove of economic value to the blind, has been fully justified. It is a clean, healthful occupation, in which no machinery is required, and which yields early and fair returns to the steady worker.

Some willows were planted last spring which will be peeled and made ready in the field by the blind themselves. Should this be as successful as is anticipated, more will be planted. By this means the blind will get willow at first cost, thus increasing their earnings.

"M. C. B." Shops.

Mattress, Chair and Broom.

The four so-called local shops are situated at 30 Eagle Street, Pittsfield (established 1906); at 159–161 Moody Street, Lowell (established 1908); at 194 Front Street, Worcester (established 1908); and at 28 Borden Street, Fall River (established 1909).

In each shop a blind foreman is directly in charge of the work and the workers, while a man with sight, otherwise employed, gives a small amount of time to the clerical details which require sight.

In Pittsfield the three lines of work indicated above are all carried on; in Worcester and Lowell, mattress and chair work is done; and in Fall River, chair and broom work. Lowell and Worcester are shortly to add broom making. Fall River is about to double its broom force, as there is excellent reason to believe that the local market will provide an outlet for at least double the present product.

In all the "M. C. B." shops a piece rate prevails for all manufacturing. In connection with each, partially blind men are employed, as far as possible, in the capacity of janitor, as guides for their totally blind mates in going to and from the shop, and as canvassers, for which services they are remunerated on a flat-rate basis.

The numbers employed and wages paid in the "M. C. B." shops, during the past year, are shown below. The wages include payments to the blind foremen and commissions to blind canvassers directly connected with each shop.

In all cases except that of the Worcester shop the attendance of workmen has been for the entire year. In Worcester there have been some changes, so that the total given does not represent the number employed for the full year or at any one time.

Shop.	Number employed.	Payments to Blind.
Pittsfield,	7	$2,759 53
Lowell,	10	2,751 57
Worcester,	9	1,915 31
Fall River,	9	2,716 70

The superintendent of training and employment for men states it to be his earnest desire —

First. — That greater efficiency, as measured by the results to the blind, may be attained in these shops, and it seems probable that the chief opportunity for attaining this end is the enlargement of our broom department as rapidly as circumstances can be made to admit of it.

Second. — That a larger number of men, always preferably local men, may be employed in these shops, until no suitable applicant need be refused or kept waiting.

Third. — That as it becomes evident that any other center in the State needs such a shop, for the employment of its local blind, and is capable of providing the necessary local support, market, etc., such additional "M. C. B." shops may be opened; otherwise we must inevitably either leave men in other districts unemployed, or transfer them undesirably far from their homes to enter the shops now existing.

In this aim the Commission heartily concurs.

Woolson House Industries for Women.

Five new workers have been added to the force this year, — two weavers, two caners and one with partial sight, able to be of assistance generally. This worker is able to do some of the finishing, heretofore done entirely by a sighted person.

In the weaving department 2,135 articles have been woven, priced at from 60 cents to $10, the bulk of the output being articles ranging from $1.50 to $2. Sales, personally conducted by the manager at some of the more exclusive gift shops, point to still another outlet for these products. Such sales have been held at "The Little Shop," Litchfield, Conn., and at "The Little Gallery," New York.

Fresh impetus has been given the weaving by the introduction of fresh, original and elaborate designs, which strike a new color note. During the year five new types of articles have been produced, with the application of nine new designs to articles already made.

In the line of oriental rugs there has been evolved at this shop a rug pronounced by experts to compare favorably with the imported article. A sample rug has been placed with the Society of Arts and Crafts, 9 Park Street, from which orders will be taken. For expert criticism and advice in this con-

nection the Commission is indebted to Miss Flint of the Museum of Fine Arts; Mr. Torrey of Torrey, Bright & Capen; and Mr. Yacobian, associated with Chandler & Co.

In the caning department over 2,000 chairs have been repaired by a force of six workers.

During the year a telephone switchboard has been installed in the Woolson House shop, connecting all Cambridge shops with the central office, and two trunk lines. This is operated by a totally blind operator, who attends daily to from 150 to 200 calls.

THE SALESROOM.

Blind Workers in their Homes.

The number of home workers is 97 (men, 9; women, 88), and their earnings have aggregated $1,880.28. Sixteen new workers (men, 1; women, 15) have been added during the year. These new workers replaced some of the previous workers who failed to make use of the salesroom this year for various reasons.

The "home trades" are tatting, netting, knitting, crocheting, carpentry, hand sewing, machine stitching, reed or raffia basket weaving.

The ages of 97 home workers are as follows: —

Women.

Between 20 and 30,	12
Between 30 and 40,	23
Between 40 and 50,	14
Between 50 and 60,	19
Between 60 and 70,	9
Between 70 and 80,	7
Between 80 and 90,	4
	88

Men.

Between 20 and 30,	2
Between 30 and 40,	2
Between 40 and 50,	2
Between 50 and 60,	1
Between 60 and 70,	2
	9

Thirty-three new types of articles have been added during the year, and sales have been held, in addition to the regular salesroom at 3 Park Street, at the following places in Massachusetts: Revere, Malden, Gloucester, Springfield, Boston, Marblehead, Beach Bluff, Siasconset, Williamsburg, Newburyport, Bridgewater, Swampscott, Nantucket, Fall River and Charlestown.

The following three ways of helping these blind workers are suggestive: —

For years one customer has placed a $50 order for knitted goods so as to keep a few needy blind women busy during the summer. The finished goods she has ready for her Christmas charities.

Another customer has for years bought up at Christmas time "undesirables," or the first knitting of blind women not up to the required standard in salesroom.

Since fall a customer has left a standing and unlimited order for sleeveless sweaters and socks to be knitted by blind women and given to the Red Cross. Thirteen blind women have been doing the work when time from other work allowed.

FINANCIAL REPORT.

Disbursements Dec. 1, 1915, to Nov. 29, 1916, from Appropriation for General Expenses.

Items.	Total.	Administration.	Industrial and Educational Aid.	Pittsfield Shop.	Lowell Shop.	Worcester Shop.	Fall River Shop.
Salaries and wages: —							
Seeing,	$11,994 51	$10,710 03	–	$240 00	$255 00	$180 00	$609 48
Blind (regular wages, commissions, etc.),	12,508 20	2,307 12	$237 97	2,759 53	2,751 57	1,915 31	2,716 70
Bonus to blind,	1,024 60	–	1,024 60	–	–	–	–
Board of apprentices and pupils,	1,448 57	–	1,448 57	–	–	–	–
Merchandise, tools, etc., furnished,	10,052 85	–	284 71	1,478 21	2,520 40	2,076 74	3,692 79
Equipment,	71 50	41 50	20 00	–	–	–	10 00
Traveling and guiding,	4,599 42	1,409 85	3,189 57	–	–	–	–
Rent, including heat, light, etc.,	4,212 76	2,434 79	–	540 38	388 84	419 00	429 75
Incidental expenses,	4,589 90	1,565 60	31 42	725 27	893 37	629 53	744 71
	$50,502 31	$18,468 89	$6,236 84	$5,743 39	$6,629 18	$5,220 58	$8,203 43
Refunds on equipment, $79 25	16,292 08	–	79 25	–	–	–	–
Amounts paid from revenue, 16,212 83		–	–	3,410 31	4,226 22	3,221 31	5,354 99
Total,	$34,210 23	$18,468 89	$6,157 59	$2,333 08	$2,402 96	$1,999 27	$2,848 44

Home Work Department.

Disbursements.		*Receipts.*	
Merchandise purchased,	$1,093 63	Home work stock, special sales,	$963 30
Wages to blind — manufacturing,	994 52	Home work stock, salesroom,	1,388 71
Commission to blind,	57 37	Home work consignments, special sales,	308 85
Payments to blind consignors,	996 64	Home work consignments, salesroom,	707 16
Wages to seeing — manufacturing,	13 87	Commission on dolls,	75
Items of general expense,	265 14		$3,368 77
	$3,421 17		

Revenue in Local Shops.

Dec. 1, 1915, to Nov. 29, 1916.

Pittsfield,	$3,646 98
Lowell,	3,724 20
Worcester,	3,065 22
Fall River,	5,306 81
	$15,743 21

Industrial Department.

RECEIPTS.

Appropriation from State,	$37,000 00
Income from finished products,	82,718 59
Income from chair reseating,	2,006 36
Income from sales of materials,	4,453 44
Income from mattress renovating,	598 46
Sales of canvassers' supplies,	43 48
Commission on dolls sold,	1 15
Samples distributed for advertising,	103 64
Sales of equipment,	58 50
Interest on bank deposits,	57 65
	$127,041 27

DISBURSEMENTS.

Merchandise purchased,	$60,857 76
Purchases for equipment,	904 19
Blind labor on goods manufactured,	25,284 90
Seeing labor on goods manufactured,	4,519 56
	$91,566 41

General Operating Expenses.

To blind: —			
General assistance and janitor work,	$7,527 03		
Commissions and royalties,	1,957 56		
		$9,484 59	
To seeing: —			
General supervision, accounting, etc.,	$13,652 11		
Rent of five shops and salesroom,	6,151 24		
		19,803 35	
Incidental expenses: —			
Freight and express,	$4,209 35		
Sundries,	156 48		
Travel,	1,334 75		
Supplies,	1,855 26		
Postage,	403 73		
Repairs and improvements,	1,485 07		
Printing,	501 69		
Advertising,	315 26		
Designing,	73 25		
Power,	299 99		
Extra cleaning,	72 05		
Laundry,	38 10		
Telephone,	637 53		
		11,382 51	
			40,670 45
			$132,236 86
Loss in inventories,			4,874 71
			$137,111 57
Gain in valuation of plants,			143 59
			$136,967 98

ASSETS.

Cash,		$2,887 22
Accounts receivable: —		
General,	$15,066 47	
Salesroom,	25 53	
Old salesroom,	68 20	
Special,	104 50	
Adjustment schedule,	46 82	
		15,311 52
Inventories: —		
Broom and mattress,	$4,780 79	
Mop shop,	2,013 51	
Oriental rug,	162 00	
Rug shop,	17,212 60	
Willow shop,	941 34	
Woolson House industries,	3,181 52	
		28,291 76
Equipment: —		
Broom and mattress,	$2,703 56	
Experimental,	40 39	
Mop shop,	1,081 28	
Manchester,	44 74	
Rug shop,	1,563 33	
Salesroom,	566 38	
Willow shop,	225 74	
Woolson House industries,	827 00	
		7,052 42
		$53,542 92

LIABILITIES.

Accounts payable,	17,075 58
Net assets Nov. 29, 1916,	$36,467 34

Appropriation to provide for the Instruction of the Adult Blind in their Homes (General Acts of 1916, Chapter 201).

Disbursements June 1, 1916, to Nov. 29, 1916: —

Services of instructors (blind),		$1,560 00
Services of clerks (seeing),		44 50
Services of guides,		402 75
Travel,		1,014 38
Merchandise for pupils,		90 01
Supplies,	$17 10	
Telephone,	12 98	
Postage,	26 78	
Sundries,	9 54	
		66 40
		$3,178 04

FINANCIAL SUMMARIES, 1906–16.

During the past ten years the State of Massachusetts has invested about $550,000 in work for the blind through a State Commission. It is appropriate to ask at this time what the returns have been to the State and to the blind, and to question whether other ways of ameliorating their condition would have been more effective, and whether an extension of the present forms of work is desirable. While a full report on work of these ten years is not possible in this report, certain interesting facts may be stated here.

The following industrial summary gives a relative idea of the growth of the work and the cash returns to the blind: —

Industrial Summary.

Year.	State Appropriation.	Number reached.	Number materially benefited.	Number given Industrial Training.[1]	Number employed regularly in Commission's Shops.[2]	Earnings of Blind in Commission's Shops (Salesroom and Staff).	Total Sales.
1906–07, . . .	$40,000 00[3]	698	464	57	68	$8,353 82	$12,612 97
1907–08, . . .	40,000 00	676	392	77	84	13,769 98	18,754 79
1908–09, . . .	45,000 00	784	380	40	86	19,502 52	34,669 40
1909–10, . . .	45,000 00	818	400	39	96	25,050 53	53,029 50
1910–11, . . .	50,000 00	876	464	42	90[4]	29,544 92	67,331 98
1911–12, . . .	57,781 04	2,081[5]	584	28	99	35,183 17	54,592 56[6]
1912–13, . . .	65,000 00	1,149	600	26	112	40,543 33	55,556 24
1913–14, . . .	67,000 00	1,695	750	20	113	42,205 55	50,737 43
1914–15, . . .	67,005 45	1,847	800	22	113	45,010 04	75,671 06
1915–16, . . .	71,210 23[7]	2,363[8]	1,043	32	132	50,350 82	88,692 18

[1] Number trained is determined largely by prospects for employment under supervision, and is no indication of number needing training.

[2] Part-time workers have been averaged for full-time and added.

[3] State appropriation July to Nov. 30, 1906, amounted to $20,000.

[4] Decrease due to change in plan of using blind agents.

[5] Includes 839 unchecked additions from Federal Census of 1910.

[6] Actually an increase, since brooms have been transferred to general account and material manufactured that was not purchased.

[7] Not including appropriation for instruction of adult blind in their homes.

[8] Not including unchecked additions through State Census of 1915.

Percentages for 1916 over 1908.

State appropriation,	78 per cent. increase.
Number reached,	249 per cent. increase.
Number materially benefited,	166 per cent. increase.
Number given industrial training,	55 per cent. decrease.
Number employed regularly in Commission's shops,	57 per cent. increase.
Earnings of blind in Commission's shops (salesroom and staff),	265 per cent. increase.
Total sales,	372 per cent. increase.

This table brings out the interesting fact that with only a 78 per cent. increase in appropriation, there has been a 166 per cent. increase in the number of individuals materially benefited, a 57 per cent. increase in the numbers regularly employed, and a 265 per cent. increase in the amounts paid to the blind. As a slight measure of the amount of effort needed to make this development possible, this table shows a 372 per cent. increase in sales for the same period. No percentage showing, however, can give any measure of the thought and of the painstaking and intelligent effort necessary to bring about this result. A moment's reflection on the part of a business man as to the readjustment that would be necessary in his shop or other enterprise if he were to run it with blind labor, and with a minimum of sighted supervision, will suggest the type of problem presented to an agency devoted to the interests of the blind. Furthermore, these figures give no indication of what has been accomplished with these annual appropriations and with the hearty co-operation of many other agencies in further saving to the Commonwealth through the prevention of blindness, the safeguarding against industrial accident and disease, the provision for children with seriously defective eyesight, and the general awakening of the public to the needs and capacities of its blind or semisighted citizens. And, finally, they show nothing of the new vigor and happiness that has been brought into hundreds of lives and of homes by providing the blind with occupation, recreation and the opportunity to contribute something towards their own support.

It will be seen that over against the total of appropriations in ten years through the State Commission ($550,000), the

direct payments to the blind through shops, salesroom and staff have been $309,514.68. This alone would bear out the generally accepted estimate throughout the country that it costs "dollar for dollar" to keep a blind man employed effectively in industry. But these earnings of the blind represent only one of the direct returns to the blind and to the State as a result of its investment of $550,000. This summary takes no account, for example, of such details as industrial aid expenditures for training, which have amounted to $18,981.54, or of other important substantial returns to the blind, outlined for the year in the following table, and to be summarized for ten years in a later report. The returns to the State from the work of ten years for prevention of blindness and conservation of eyesight, and other directions, are obviously neither measured nor suggested in a summary of this kind.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES, DEC. 1, 1915, TO NOV. 30, 1916.

Numbers.

The Commission has registered, during the fiscal year 1915–16, 2,363 persons, 793 of whom were reported for the first time. Special service has been rendered to about 1,043 individuals, many of whom have been helped in several ways, as follows: —

1. Training has been given or expenses provided during training to	32
2. Regular employment has been given to or secured for . . .	150
3. Temporary work has been given to or secured for . . .	25
4. Home industry, fostered by loans, equipment, use of canvasser, use of salesroom, etc., for	208
5. Shop industry or canvassing, fostered by provision of guide, to .	70
6. Information and advice of more than a passing nature about medical care, special education, occupations, relief, etc., has been given to	305
7. Reported to other agencies for blind, ...	506
8. Reported to general agencies, ...	127
9. Recreations, symphony and other concerts, outings, vacations, etc., have been given by others through the Commission to .	259

By way of getting comparative values, it is interesting to figure what might have been done with these same amounts in the form of pensions or relief, — a question of keenest interest

to the blind of the State at this time. Careful administration is, as already stated, essential to the value of any system of pensions or relief, but assuming for the moment no cost for administration, $550,000 would allow only $150 per year for ten years to about 360 persons.

The Commission has no reason to believe, however, that such an alternative is truly desired by the blind as a whole. They want both work and relief, in proportion as both are needed.

No confusion should be allowed to gather in the public mind as to the continued existence of the group to whom occupation is life, and idleness living death. Any one in doubt on this point need only visit the seven shops, developed under the Commission during the last ten years, to discover the meaning of the constructive work that has been done in this direction; and further, to visit the homes of the newly blind, suffering for occupation, to discover the need of doing still more for the occupation of the blind. Whatever the need of relief (and it is a real one) the demand for it should, in the name of the industrious and able blind, never be allowed to confuse the public as to the educational and industrial needs of those among the blind who are eager to help themselves and able to do so, when their chances with the sighted are tolerably equalized. The emphasis has changed in ten years in work for the blind, as it has in many another field. Pensions are the theme of the hour, but the words of Helen Keller, spoken ten years ago, are no less true to-day than then.

"Once blind men were beggars, holding out a cup; now they are your fellow citizens, asking a chance to earn their daily bread. Only when they work can they hold up their heads."

Looking still further back, to the days in which Dr. Howe started a workshop for the blind in South Boston in 1838, we find a message as true to-day as then: "There would be no unhappiness, no repining in a community of blind persons, on account of what is supposed to be their great misfortune, if they could free themselves of the real and greater misfortune of dependence."

TEN-YEAR SURVEY.

With the idea of making the best possible use of the ten years' experience of the Commission for the Blind, both for the future work in this State and for any help it may yield to other communities, the Board, with the support and help of the Massachusetts Association for Promoting the Interests of the Adult Blind, the organization which brought about the Commission's existence ten years ago, is in process of making a ten-year survey. This has been made possible by the cordial co-operation of eminent workers for the blind outside Massachusetts, invited to inspect the work of the Commission and to make a critical report of their findings, with recommendations, to the association.

The six gentlemen (three of whom are blind) invited to make this survey were asked not only because of their standing as educators of the young blind, but also because each has had experience with work for the adult blind, three having served on State commissions. The group consists of —

Sir Frederick Fraser of Halifax, N. S., Chairman.
Graduate of Perkins Institution; superintendent of the Halifax School for the Blind.

O. H. Burritt of Overbrook, Pa.
Principal of the Pennsylvania School for the Blind; member of the first New York Commission for the Blind.

James J. Dow of Minnesota.
Superintendent of the Minnesota State School for the Blind, Faribault, Minn., where a summer school for adults is maintained.

Robert B. Irwin of Cleveland, Ohio.
Graduate of the Washington State School for the Blind; M.A., Harvard, 1909; supervisor of classes for conservation of eyesight, city of Cleveland.

E. P. Morford of Brooklyn, N. Y.
Postgraduate, New York City School for the Blind; superintendent of the Brooklyn Industrial Home for the Blind; member of the executive committee of the New York Association for the Blind; and member of the first New York Commission for the Blind.

E. M. Van Cleve of New York, N. Y.
Principal of the New York Institute for the Education of the Blind, managing director, national committee for the prevention of blindness.

Five of these six authorities on blindness have found it possible to give from three to ten days to an investigation of

the Massachusetts work, under the following outline: organization, record and report, the blind in the community, subsidized shops, and relation to other agencies.

In the course of their visits much valuable criticism has been received, and many of their helpful suggestions have already become a part of the daily work of the staff and of the plans of the Board. The Commission looks to the full report of this committee with much interest and with high expectation of constructive results.

In further pursuance of the plan to make the fullest possible application of information and experience gathered in ten years, the Commission has arranged with the general superintendent to get together and arrange for publication, during a leave of absence from the regular work of the office, all material effective for this purpose. It is hoped that this work may be accomplished within a few months.

The year has been an exceptionally difficult one for the workers because of attacks upon the methods and motives of the Commission and of its agents. While they would be the last to claim that they have attained anything more than that beginning of wisdom which comes from experience in dealing with a human problem so complex as that of blindness, they do maintain that from the beginning they have followed a consistent policy of acting, on the one hand, as conscientious trustees of State funds, and, on the other, as true and sympathetic friends of the blind. And the members of the Commission, most of whom have been with the work almost from its inception, are glad to make public record of their admiration for the spirit not only of devotion, but of scrupulous fairness and unselfish breadth in which all those in its employ perform their complicated and often difficult duties.

Respectfully submitted,

JAMES P. MUNROE,
ANNETTE P. ROGERS,
AGNES C. TAFF,
WALTER B. SNOW,
EDWARD E. ALLEN,
Commission for the Blind.

This man, a florist before loss of sight, now blind for five years, is seen with a successful tomato crop, raised in the greenhouse that with the aid of friends he has built, equipped and put to effective use since he lost his sight.

SPECIAL REPORTS.

REPORT OF THE GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT.

AID TO BLIND PERSONS THROUGH OVERSEERS OF THE POOR FROM JUNE TO DECEMBER, 1916.[1]

Acting in accordance with the requirements of chapter 160 of the General Laws of 1916, a letter, under date of Aug. 25, 1916, was sent from the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind to overseers of the poor in cities and towns of Massachusetts and to the State Board of Charity. Following is a report containing some statistics and other subject-matter collected during a three months' study of the results. This study was made possible by the provision of a special worker, whose salary was provided by the Association for the Blind. The letter was as follows: —

Boston, Aug. 25, 1916.

Chairman, Overseers of the Poor (City or Town), Mass.

Dear Sir: — Will you, in accordance with chapter 160 of the General Laws of 1916, of which I enclose a copy, very kindly help this Board to find out just how many blind individuals, or families in which there is a blind individual, are aided by the cities and towns and by the State? We shall be glad, in turn, to make report to you, in accordance with the requirements of this same law, of any activity on our part in regard to cases so reported. To secure a complete record for six months ending Nov. 30, 1916, for use this winter, we ask that you send us information as above for all cases that have been aided since June 1, 1916, as well as from now on. This is especially important in order that we may have this data to contribute to the discussion of the question of pensions for the needy blind.

Perhaps I should explain that by blindness we mean sight impaired to such an extent in both eyes that the individual cannot receive schooling in the usual way, or follow his regular occupation. It means total blind-

[1] Based upon the report of Miss Jessie E. Catton, made possible through co-operation of the Massachusetts Association for Promoting the Interests of the Blind.

ness, and also such impairment of vision that even with the aid of glasses it is impossible to read the newspaper.

If you are not familiar with the work of this Board you may like to know that we can visit and inform the blind about various privileges open to them in nursery, school, shops and through general agencies; can give industrial training and industrial aid and employment in suitable cases, and can provide teachers who visit the home from time to time and give instruction in reading and writing by touch and in simple manual processes, working under chapter 385 of the Acts of 1906 and chapter 201 of the Acts of 1916. You will note under chapter 385 of the Acts of 1906 that we may "ameliorate the condition of the blind" in various ways, but "*provided*, that the commission shall not undertake the permanent support or maintenance of any blind person."

I enclose cards for reply, one for each case, and shall be glad to provide as many added cards as you may require.

Thanking you in advance for your co-operation in this matter,

Respectfully yours,

LUCY WRIGHT,
General Superintendent.

The report card was as follows: —

OVERSEERS OF THE POOR OF..... REPORT.

Name of Blind Individual or Individuals: ..... Age:

Address:.....

Settlement: (State City or Town):.....

Name of Family:.....

Outdoor Aid: Kind and Amounts?.....

Indoor Aid: Where?.....

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Summary of Results.

Number of overseers to whom letter was sent,		354
Number of overseers reporting no blind aided,		188
Number of overseers reporting aid to blind people,		103
Total number reporting,		291
Total number of blind people aided,		225
Number receiving outdoor aid,		135
Number receiving indoor aid,		90 [1]
In almshouses,	86	
In Worcester Memorial Home,	3	
In Boston Nursery for Blind Babies,	1	

[1] Not including Tewksbury, Long Island and other almshouses not covered in this study.

Number not previously known to Commission,		89
Number of overseers visited or conferred with by telephone,		92
Number of blind people visited,		81
Number referred to Commission office for special service on account of blindness: —		
Home teaching,	8	
Medical care for eyes,	6	
Possible shop employment,	2	
Other needs,	8	
	—	24

Comment.

It is to be noted that a follow-up letter to overseers was sent out October 16, that 63 towns have not yet replied, and that since this summary was made, other reports have been sent in. It is further to be noted that in some of the larger cities, overseers have not always been sure that the fact of blindness had been noted in families already under aid. In spite of these details, however, this appears in the matter of outdoor aid to be a fairly complete report for six months, — certainly enough to indicate that the work should be systematically continued. With the limits of funds and time, it seemed best for the follow-up worker to devote herself chiefly to the outdoor relief cases, the data for almshouses being relatively familiar.

It is to be observed that 89 cases not previously known to the Commission were discovered through this study; that in visiting 81 cases 24 were found where existing resources for the blind could be of service. Incidentally, in visiting and conferring with overseers, many valuable suggestions were brought out as to constructive possibilities of this type of co-operation between overseers and Commission towards the increased comfort and happiness of blind persons in their homes or in almshouses.

Outdoor Relief.

An instance in the case of outdoor relief is suggested by the following illustration: —

A woman sixty-four years of age, receiving $1.50 per week from the overseers, lives with her daughter, who goes out to work early in the morning, not returning until evening. This woman is very timid, never gets out except to church on

Sunday with her daughter, and has only a small space where she can move about in her room. She has been longing for occupation, and received with great joy the offer of instruction by home teachers.

The overseers, not realizing the possibility for a woman of her age, had not previously reported her to the Commission for the Blind.

Indoor Relief.

Interesting evidence has already been contributed by several of the smaller almshouses as to the possibility of keeping blind persons happily occupied, and is illustrated by the following details: —

A partially blind man, who can distinguish forms, herds cows in a certain part of the almshouse grounds. Another, totally blind, prepares all the potatoes for spring planting, and complains because he does not have work enough.

A blind woman does the washing for the family of the almshouse keeper, and even taught a sighted woman improved methods of laundry work.

Another woman reads the Bible from Braille to a group of inmates every Sunday afternoon.

It should be remembered, also, that the blind in almshouses receive medical and nursing treatment, general and systematic supervision as to daily habits, and very often many little attentions from sighted inmates, such as outdoor guidance, reading aloud, helping to arrange food at meal time, and that they are seldom left *all alone*, as is often the case in their own homes.

While the blind in the smaller almshouses, very largely the aged, often receive this remarkable degree of individual attention, those in the larger institutions suffer, in the very nature of the case, from exactly that lack. In both the smaller and larger almshouses, visits of home teachers are pleasantly anticipated, and appear to bring, not only opportunity for occupation, but inspiration and incentive towards right living and contentment.

It seems probable that plans for bringing fresh interest into the lives of the blind in almshouses can be further developed.

This is borne out by two interesting experiments carried out by the superintendent of training and employment for women, made possible by private funds.

The first experiment consisted in furnishing, through the home teachers, materials for occupational work for almshouse inmates, to make necessary articles for their own use or gifts for their friends.

The second experiment consisted in twice sending holiday gifts to the entire blind population at Tewksbury. In reply to an inquiry from the sender as to the effect of this plan on other inmates, the superintendent replies as follows: —

> I wish to acknowledge and thank you in behalf of the infirmary for your Christmas packages for the blind. . . . I wish to assure you that these added a great deal to the enjoyment of their Christmas here, and I think it seldom has the effect to cause unhappiness among the other inmates, but gives them pleasure as well, for this is a large community in which all of the patients are of necessity most constant and near neighbors . . . and, with exceptions that must occur in a large institution, they do find special pleasure in the happiness of the others around them.

REPORT

OF THE

SUPERINTENDENT OF TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT FOR MEN.

ANALYTICAL REVIEW OF TEN YEARS' WORK OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT FOR MEN.

NEEDS IN 672 CASES, 1906–16.

Reference to a detailed schedule presented by this agent of all the cases dealt with by him during the period from Aug. 1, 1906, to Nov. 30, 1916, shows that he still retains 213 cases on his active list of those needing something else than a mere continuance of present opportunities. This does not include those employed in our workshops, who are receiving living wages, and for whom a perpetuation of existing arrangements is all that is required at present.

These may be roughly grouped, setting aside finer distinctions, as follows: —

First. — Those whose needs could probably be satisfactorily met by employment in such shops as the Commission now maintains, but for whom we have at present no provision, nor chance to make any. It is estimated that those placed in this group would, if employed in our shops, draw living wages, judging by comparison with those now in our employ of the same general types. This group totals 79.

Second. — Those for whom more suitable and effective provision could be made in an industrial home. This includes a few now retained in our shops (who cannot earn living wages) because nothing but the almshouse awaits them if we dismiss them, and a much larger number of those whom we cannot take into the shops, — not because of our lack of opportunity but because of their own deficiencies.

Some are aged and homeless, but not incapacitated, and would find such an institution a godsend, when the alternative

is living in the open community. Others, while capable of partial support, and anxious to contribute all they can toward it, cannot even with the present form of shop subsidy "make good," and a home in which they might do what they can and receive in return adequate provision for their daily needs would be equally welcome. Still others need closer supervision in work or in life than can be given them in nonresidential shops, which must be carried as nearly as circumstances will permit on a commercial basis. This group totals 40.

Third. — Among those now in almshouses, who have been referred to this agent, he finds some with considerable industrial capacity, who could be wisely transferred to an industrial home; also there are many who are not now in almshouses, but are precariously near the point of being obliged to go thither, and may find this inevitable at almost any moment. This group totals 46.

Fourth. — There is still another group which, by the nature of circumstances, variously analyzed in detail, should not enter an industrial home, yet whose industrial capacity and other resources are insufficient to provide for their necessities. For such State aid in some form should be provided, adequately and at once. Hardly any two cases are exactly alike, in nature of circumstances or in need, and the plan provided for them should be correspondingly elastic and intelligently administered. This group numbers 48. (See report on "M. C. B." shops, page 20.)

Note. — It should be kept in mind, in considering the matter here presented, —

First. — That the agent here reporting deals only with the cases of blind men.

Second. — That he deals only with such cases of blind men as are specifically referred to him by our registration department.

Third. — That it is not the intention of the registration department to refer to him any men's cases in which, after investigation, it is not believed that there are industrial possibilities.

Fourth. — That because of these three reasons the results of such a study as is here shown, if carried out through all our

blind on the same basis, would not only show much larger numbers in each classification, but a greatly disproportionate increase of those needing institutional opportunities or direct relief.

INDEX [1] TO STUDY AND ANALYSIS OF NEEDS IN SIX HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-TWO CASES, AUG. 1, 1906, TO NOV. 30, 1916.

I. Men on our waiting list (or of suitable type for place there even though they may not have filed application). Those for whom the same sort of opportunities as now exist are exactly what are required, but for whom there is no present opening. Increased appropriation is required in order that the present facilities may be enlarged and extended to provide promptly and effectively for the needs of this group and others of the same type that may become known to us, which is happening every day. Total, 79.

(*a*) Men judged to be suitable for training and later for employment in the Commission's shops, or already trained and waiting for work, 58.

(*b*) Men ambitious and suitable for competitive work among the seeing, 8.

(*c*) Men preferring, and deemed suitable for, home industry, or independent enterprise, 13.

II. Men whose needs can best be met in an industrial home, because they need greater supervision in work or life than can be given in an ordinary nonresidential shop, are homeless, are weak morally or mentally, are of low earning capacity, etc. Such an industrial home might well be used as a training school from which suitable cases might be transferred to our non-residential shops as opportunity offered, while those for whom such transfer proved undesirable might remain permanently. Total, 86.

(*a*) Men now in our shops, but whom it would be wiser to transfer to an industrial home; men of advanced years, of low earning capacity, etc., 9.

[1] This index and the table following are given as interesting illustrations of statistical work done on the typewriter by a totally blind man without sighted aid, and are published here in full to bring out the method by which he arrived at the figures for the report, — a possible suggestion for some other blind worker.

(*b*) Men whom we have found it necessary to dismiss from our shops, or those who have withdrawn and cannot be received back into such connection, for whom such an institution would offer suitable opportunity, 19.

(*c*) Men to whom we have found it necessary to refuse places on our waiting list for employment in nonresidential shops, but who might perfectly well be admitted to such an institution, 12.

(*d*) Mendicants; so-called street musicians, peddlers, canvassers who are not doing a legitimate commercial business, or who are only attempting it because there is no other alternative. This does not include those who are carrying on a successful and legitimate independent enterprise, even "on the street," 17.

(*e*) Men now in almshouses or other institutions from which they might perfectly well be transferred to an industrial home, where they would have opportunity of doing whatever they are able toward their own support, would be better understood and supervised through specialized management, 7.

(*f*) Men who, although not now in the almshouse or similar institution, are withheld from it only by such resources as in the nature of things cannot be expected to last long, and who therefore ultimately have to go to the almshouse or other institution, unless we can intervene with an industrial home, 22.

III. Men for whom State aid or relief in some form should be provided. Not a so-called pension, not indiscriminating, wholesale grants, but aid intelligently given, according to circumstances. This in no case includes those who are now in almshouses, or who are suitable candidates for an industrial home, but who are obviously better off to remain outside any institution, — young men, men with families, etc., whose standard of life is satisfactory, and who need help to make it decently possible to so continue. Total, 48.

(*a*) Men who have nothing and are earning nothing, or but little and irregularly, and who are supported by those who find their support a burden. These are not in our shops or suitable for admission, 39.

(*b*) Men in our shops whose wages, even augmented as far as we can do so under the present law, or think it desirable

that we should be authorized to do so, are below living wage, yet who should not be transferred to an industrial home, 9.

IV. Men for whom satisfactory provision has already been made, and whose need is for a continuance of the same provision. Those employed in our shops are receiving a living wage, and those carrying on independent operations are making good in a reasonable degree. Total, 149.

(*a*) Men employed in our workshops or otherwise by us, 79.

(*b*) Men employed by other agencies for the blind, 17.

(*c*) Men employed in competition with the seeing, 22.

(*d*) Men receiving training with a view to being employed by us later, or being assisted in establishing an independent enterprise, etc., 4.

(*e*) Men receiving instruction from the State home teachers for the blind, such service being all that is best or needed for the present, 1.

(*f*) Men whose employment has been fostered in home industry or independent enterprise by loans, stock at wholesale, services of canvasser, use of salesroom or other marketing facilities, services of guide, etc., 26.

V. Eliminated from this study for the following reasons (total, 310): —

(*a*) Women (a few women's cases have been referred to Mr. Holmes from time to time, for various reasons, but obviously do not come into this study), 34.

(*b*) No need; independent means; earning supporting income at present; cared for by those competent and willing to do so, 60.

(*c*) Removed from State, 61.

(*d*) Not blind or recovered sight, 15.

(*e*) Disappeared. Removed without address being obtainable; mail returned unclaimed; or inquiry not answered, 47.

(*f*) Dead, 62.

(*g*) Incapacitated or aged. Not entering into any industrial study, and so provided for as not to require State aid, 31.

Summary.

The summary of the preceding schedule, analyzed in accordance with the description given, shows these results: —

	I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.
a,	58				
b,	8				
c,	13				
a,		9			
b,		19			
c,		12			
d,		17			
e,		7			
f,		22			
a,			39		
b,			9		
a,				79	
b,				17	
c,				22	
d,				4	
e,				1	
f,				26	
a,					34
b,					60
c,					61
d,					15
e,					47
f,					62
g,					31
	79	86	48	149	310

Total,	I.,	79
	II.,	86
	III.,	48
	IV.,	149
	V.,	310
		672

REPORT

OF THE

FIELD AGENT FOR CONSERVATION OF EYESIGHT.

Congenital cataract. Before operation. Almost blind. Unruly in school.

After operation. Fair vision with glasses. Docile in school. Making progress.

REPORT OF THE FIELD AGENT FOR CONSERVATION OF EYESIGHT.

PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS.

I.

Ophthalmia Neonatorum.

The work for prevention of blindness from ophthalmia neonatorum ("babies' sore eyes") has been less successful than during the preceding year. Instead of a single baby becoming blind, three babies (and possibly a fourth[1]) have this year become blind from this cause. What is worse, the record of neglect is very serious.

One of these cases is important as illustrating the danger of reinfection. The child, after being cured of ophthalmia neonatorum, was discharged. The eyes were reinfected, and before the physician was called in again the child was blind. Though this child's blindness is due to the ignorance of her parents, that very ignorance must be attributed to the physician whose duty it was to warn them effectively as to the importance of securing professional aid at the first symptoms of reinfection.

An analogous failure to take proper precautions was that of a reputable hospital. For the second time to our knowledge, this hospital has neglected to report (as required by the regulations of the State Board of Charity for lying-in hospitals) the discharge uncured of a baby with ophthalmia neonatorum. The result in this case, blindness in one eye, is not so serious as it might well have been. It should, however, be a warning to all lying-in hospitals.

A second instance of blindness in both eyes is one of those very rare cases in which blindness results in spite of the best

[1] At the time of filing this report the cause of possible blindness and the final degree of vision are still both uncertain.

medical and nursing care. This child's blindness is apparently due to lack of physical resistance rather than to any sort of neglect.

The third case, one of the worst in many years, is one in which the child's total blindness in both eyes is apparently due to the illegal conduct of a midwife, two physicians and a district nurse, all of whom failed to report to the Board of Health the presence of "sore eyes" in a baby coming successively under their care.

These cases are certainly serious enough to show that the effort to abolish blindness from ophthalmia neonatorum cannot safely be relaxed; and that what we congratulated ourselves upon last year must be still further emphasized, *i.e.*, "the working together by the State Department of Health, local boards, the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind and the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in a campaign of extraordinary intensiveness."

II.

Publicity.

The campaign of publicity which is so important in the work for the prevention of blindness, not only from ophthalmia neonatorum, but from even more important causes, has been continued. This Commission's exhibit has been in especially active use. It has been shown in Andover, Athol, Boston, Cambridge, Fall River, Lawrence, Southbridge and Whitman. Sets of lantern slides, some of them colored, have also been shown.

III.

Industry and Eyesight.

The investigations into deterioration of eyesight in industry, authorized by chapter 603, Acts of 1911, have not yet been begun by the Board of Labor and Industries. That Board has been prevented from doing more than to issue a pamphlet on this subject, because of the failure of the Legislature to make the necessary appropriation provided for in section 4 of this law. It is hoped that the next Legislature will provide the needed funds.

Meantime, questions of industrial importance have been

approached in a special study of myopia, promoted by this Commission and made at the Massachusetts Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary under the direction of the Boston School for Social Workers. A portion of this study follows under section V.

IV.

Health Insurance.

Closely connected with industrial problems is the demand for health insurance legislation. At the time of the preliminary hearings on this question, last year, this Commission voted "that it favors the study of health insurance by the State, with a view to devising methods whereby insurance can be practically applied in this State to the preservation of the public health." An adequate system would include maternity insurance, providing for its beneficiaries proper nursing and obstetric care,—prenatal, natal and postnatal. In this way the amount of blindness from ophthalmia neonatorum could be reduced. An adequate system of health insurance, by providing early and efficient medical care, would also help to prevent the after effects of various general diseases to which much blindness is now due.

V.

Myopia Cases at the Massachusetts Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary.[1]

As the title indicates, this is a study of myopia,[2] and is based upon the records of patients coming to the Massachusetts Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary for the first time between Jan. 1, 1915, and Jan. 1, 1916. Throughout the study myopic astigmatism[3] is considered as an accompanying condition.

Chart A shows the refraction of 1,524 eyes in cases of myopia and compound myopic astigmatism expressed in diopters.[4] . . . Using the total number of eyes as a basis, the percentage of cases in each degree is obtained; these percentages are graphically shown in the chart.

The greater part of the work of the clinic lies in the refraction

[1] Printed by permission of the Boston School for Social Workers and of the author, Harriet Gage.

[2] Myopia is "short sight," a refractive condition in which parallel rays of light entering the eye focus at a point in front of the retina.

[3] Astigmatism is a refractive error which causes rays of light entering the eye to focus at irregular distances, producing a confused image upon the retina.

[4] The units used in measuring degrees of refractive error.

of comparatively small errors. Forty-three per cent. of the refractions are below 2 D.;[1] 56 per cent. are cases of low myopia (below 3 D.); 20 per cent. more are cases of medium myopia, making 76 per cent. of the cases below 6 D. Twenty per cent. are cases of high myopia. Only 2½ per cent. show very high myopia. These figures indicate the great opportunity that the infirmary has to do preventive work. This work involves not only giving a prescription, but also insuring periodic return for observation, giving instructions concerning the proper care of the eyes, and making plain the importance of good general hygiene. Such a program calls for both medical and social work. . . .

The subject of visual acuity is taken up in this paper for its sociological rather than for its medical importance, although medical and social work in cases of ocular defect are almost inseparable. As Gould[2] has put it, "Ophthalmology is very frequently another name for sociology." In Table I. are classified cases with diminution of visual acuity in one or both eyes. The summary at the end of the table gives the situation in brief. All cases in which vision has been incompletely recorded have been excluded. This tabulation has been done in great detail; first, to show the extent of defective eyesight among a fairly large group of myopes; second, to show how far the social problem with these known cases is one of education, and how far it is one of occupational adjustment.

Table II. shows the age and sex of all patients having vision with correcting lenses of $^{20}/_{70}$ or less in one or both eyes.

The age groups used in Tables I. and II. indicate different phases of the problem, — one of prevention of increase of myopia, the other of education and occupational guidance, which increases in difficulty with increasing age. The vision groups are those used by the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind; "$^{20}/_{70}$ to $^{20}/_{200}$" indicates handicap so far as "fine work" is concerned; "$^{20}/_{200}$" indicates the border-line cases; "less than $^{20}/_{200}$" indicates practical or total blindness.[3]

[1] Diopters.

[2] Gould, Geo. M.: "The New Ophthalmology and its Relation to General Medicine, Biology and Sociology."

[3] This statement is true in general, and the use of the term with this meaning is sufficiently accurate for the purpose of this table. It must be remembered, however, that equal degrees of defect do not necessarily indicate equal degrees of handicap, since the ability to use a remnant of vision differs in individuals.

From Table II. it is seen that 257, or 31 per cent. of the cases, are handicapped to such an extent that they are in need of investigation by the Commission. One hundred and eleven of these patients are male, 67 of them between the ages of twenty-one and sixty, who under normal conditions would be wage earners, many of them with dependent families. Seventy-seven of the patients are women of the same age group. How far diminution of visual acuity is an economic handicap among this group cannot be said; but it is a safe estimate that at least 25 per cent.[1] of them would be employed outside the home if not handicapped.

The problem of education which is presented here is grave. Twenty-eight children of school age are among those sorely handicapped. Thirty-eight patients are from fifteen to twenty-one years of age, — a period when they would normally be fitting themselves for self-support.

As would be expected, the number of cases of very low visual acuity and blindness increase with increasing age. Too much stress cannot, however, be laid upon the cases of younger persons with higher, though diminishing, visual acuity, who need guidance and directive education.

Any study of myopia as a problem of the clinic would be incomplete without a special consideration of the school group. The relation of school life to eye defects is a question which has excited great interest in the medical and educational world for many years, particularly since 1865, when Cohn[2] made his extensive study of 1,004 myopic children. He found that the number of short-sighted pupils increased from class to class. This condition is also shown by Tenner[3] in a recent study of 1,008 myopic cases among school children in New York.

Chart B presents a similar rise in 223 children from 2.7 per cent. of the total number at six years to 19.2 per cent. at fourteen years.

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[1] This estimate is based upon the figure given in the 1910 census for women over twenty employed in gainful occupations. The census figure is 23 per cent., which, considering the greater range in years and the fact that the census figures include all economic classes of the population, is undoubtedly too low for this study. The percentage given here (25 per cent.) may, therefore, be considered very conservative.

[2] Cohn, Hermann: "Hygiene of the Eyes;" the section on "The Occurrence of Myopia among School Children." English Translation by Ayers, S. C., and Bishop, J. P.

[3] Tenner, Arthur S.: Refraction in School Children. New York Medical Journal, Sept. 18, 1915

TABLE I., PART 1. — *Seventy-nine Patients with Corrected Vision of the Better Eye $^{20}/_{70}$ to $^{20}/_{200}$.*

Better eye,		$^{20}/_{70}$ to $^{20}/_{200}$.			Number of Males.	Number of Females.
Worse eye,		$^{20}/_{70}$ to $^{20}/_{200}$.	$^{20}/_{200}$.	Less than $^{20}/_{200}$.		
Age Groups.						
To 6,	Male,	–	–	–	–	–
	Female,	–	–	–	–	–
6 to 15,	Male,	2	–	–	2	–
	Female,	3	2	–	–	5
15 to 21,	Male,	2	–	3	5	–
	Female,	3	–	3	–	6
21 to 31,	Male,	–	2	–	2	–
	Female,	2	3	2	–	7
31 to 41,	Male,	4	2	2	8	–
	Female,	4	–	1	–	5
41 to 60,	Male,	2	6	2	10	–
	Female,	7	4	1	–	12
60 and over,	Male,	6	–	5	11	–
	Female,	2	2	2	–	6
Totals,		37	21	21	38	41

TABLE I., PART 2. — *Thirty-seven Patients with Corrected Vision of the Better Eye $^{20}/_{200}$.*

Better eye,		$^{20}/_{200}$.		Number of Males.	Number of Females.
Worse eye,		$^{20}/_{200}$.	Less than $^{20}/_{200}$.		
Age Groups.					
To 6,	Male,	–	–	–	–
	Female,	–	–	–	–
6 to 15,	Male,	–	–	–	–
	Female,	1	–	–	1
15 to 21,	Male,	–	–	–	–
	Female,	1	1	–	2
21 to 31,	Male,	2	–	2	–
	Female,	2	–	–	2
31 to 41,	Male,	1	1	2	–
	Female,	2	–	–	2
41 to 60,	Male,	5	2	7	–
	Female,	3	3	–	6
60 and over,	Male,	2	3	5	–
	Female,	3	5	–	8
Totals,		22	15	16	21

TABLE I., PART 3. — *Twenty-two Patients with Corrected Vision of the Better Eye less than 20/200.*

Better eye,		Less than 20/200.	Number of Males.	Number of Females.
Worse eye,		Less than 20/200.		
Age Groups.				
To 6,	Male,	–	–	–
	Female,	–	–	–
6 to 15,	Male,	–	–	–
	Female,	1	–	1
15 to 21,	Male,	–	–	–
	Female,	2	–	2
21 to 31,	Male,	–	–	–
	Female,	–	–	–
31 to 41,	Male,	2	2	–
	Female,	2	–	2
41 to 60,	Male,	4	4	–
	Female,	5	–	5
60 and over,	Male,	1	1	–
	Female,	5	–	5
Totals,		22	7	15

Summary.

Patients with corrected vision of both eyes 20/20 or more,	362
Patients with corrected vision of better eye 20/20 or more,	87
Patients with corrected vision of better eye 20/30,	96
Patients with corrected vision of better eye 20/40,	74
Patients with corrected vision of better eye 20/50,	55
Patients with corrected vision of better eye 20/70 to 20/200,	79
Patients with corrected vision of better eye 20/200,	37
Patients with corrected vision of both eyes less than 20/200,	22
Total having diminution of visual acuity in one or both eyes,	450

TABLE II. — *Two hundred and fifty-seven Patients with Myopia, Compound Myopic Astigmatism and Simple Myopic Astigmatism, having Vision with Correcting Lenses of 20/70 or Less in One or Both Eyes, classified according to Visual Acuity and Age.*

Better eye,	Better than 20/70.			20/70 to 20/200.			20/200.		Less than 20/200.	Number of Patients.	Number of Males.	Number of Females.
Worse eye,	20/70 to 20/200.	20/200.	Less than 20/200.	20/70 to 20/200.	20/200.	Less than 20/200.	20/200.	Less than 20/200.	Less than 20/200.			
Age Groups.												
To 6,	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
6 to 15,	7	6	6	5	2	–	1	–	1	28	10	18
15 to 21,	13	3	6	5	–	6	1	1	2	37	10	27
21 to 31,	12	6	7	2	5	2	4	–	–	38	15	23
31 to 41,	5	1	3	8	2	3	3	1	4	30	17	13
41 to 60,	11	10	11	9	10	3	8	5	9	76	35	41
60 and over,	4	–	8	8	2	7	5	8	6	48	24	24
Totals,	52	26	41	37	21	21	22	15	22	257	111	146

CHART A.

Showing Refraction of 1,524 Eyes in Cases of Myopia and Compound Myopic Astigmatism.

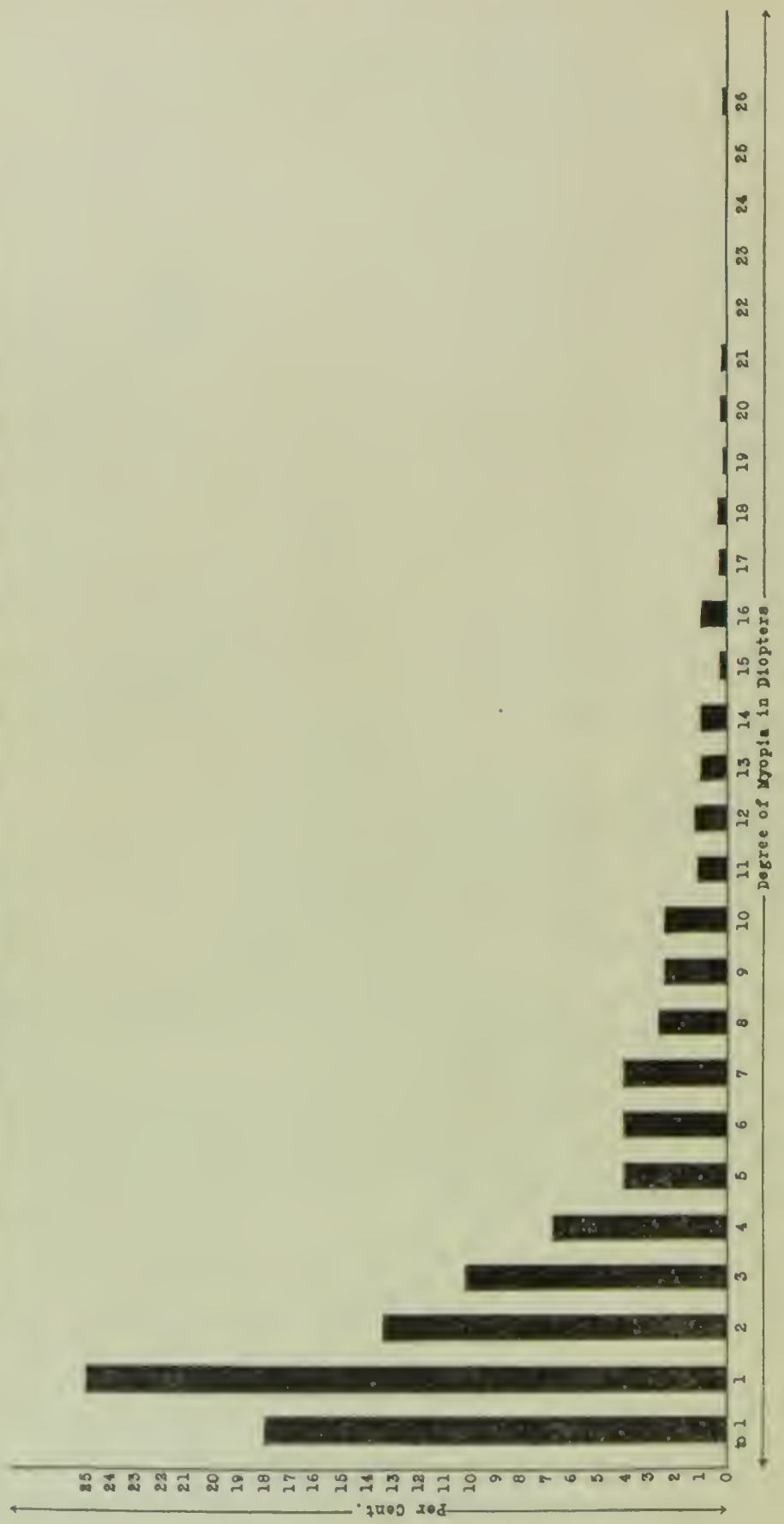
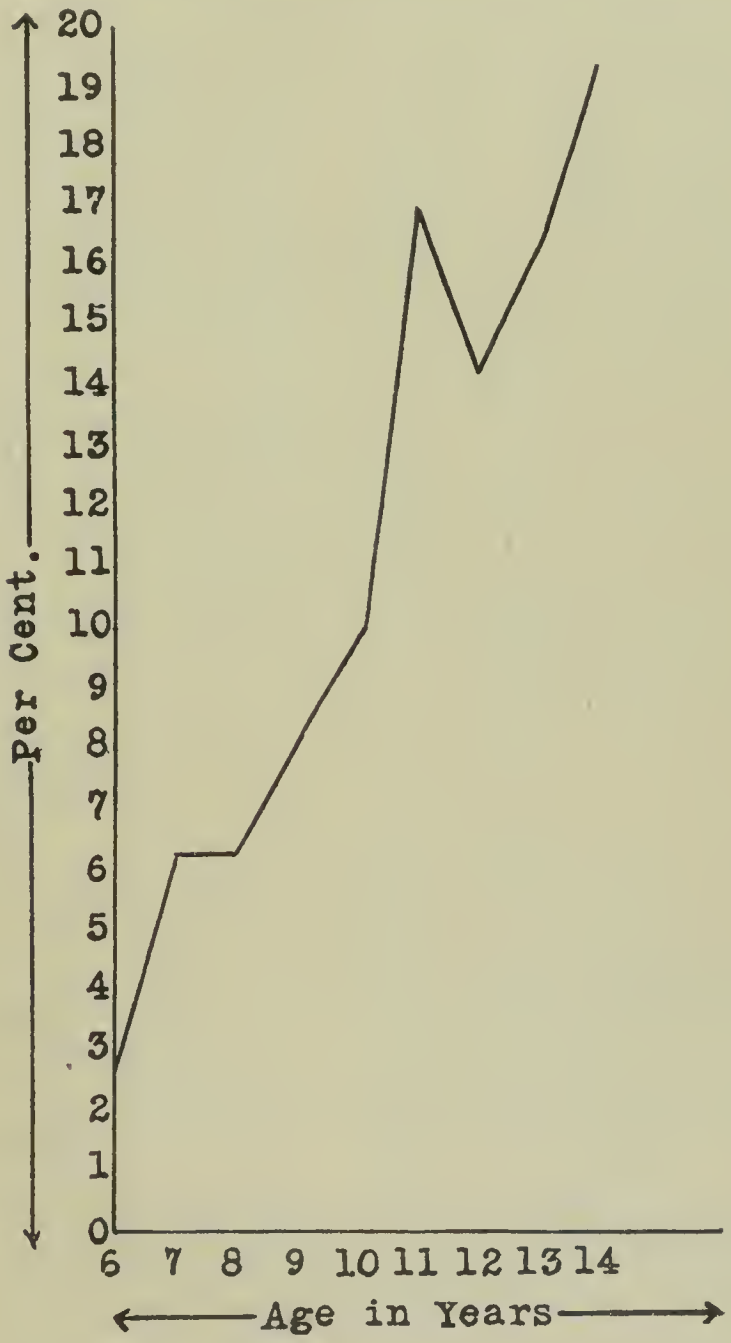


CHART B.

Showing Percentage of 223 Myopic School Children in Each School Year.



REPORT

ON THE

CONDITION AND EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH SERIOUSLY DEFECTIVE SIGHT.

Sight-saving class, public schools, New Bedford, established in September, 1916.

REPORT ON THE CONDITION AND EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH SERIOUSLY DEFECTIVE SIGHT.

General Acts 1916, Chapter 160, Section 2.

Section 2. Said chapter three hundred and eighty-five is hereby further amended by inserting a new section after section two to be numbered 2A, as follows: — *Section 2A.* The commission is further authorized to register cases of persons whose eyesight is seriously defective or who are liable to become visually handicapped or blind, and to take such measures, in co-operation with other authorities, as it may deem advisable for the prevention of blindness or conservation of eyesight, and, in appropriate cases, for the education of children and for the vocational guidance of adults having seriously defective sight. [*Approved April 27, 1916.*

Introduction.

By amendment to the law creating this Commission, the Legislature of 1916 put on a permanent basis the work for persons with seriously defective sight for which previous Legislatures had provided by special resolves. Under the direction of the general superintendent, the field agent, and acting field agent for conservation of eyesight have accordingly continued the work for school children, and with the help of other members of the staff and of special workers have attempted to broaden the basis of knowledge on which it rests. To this end our study of visual conditions in public schools, previously carried on in a series of typical cities, has now been extended into towns.

I.

The Increase of Special Classes.

As a direct result of our earlier studies the third public school class in Massachusetts for children with defective sight was opened in Cambridge in March, 1916, and a fourth in New Bedford in September, 1916; and though the second class,

that in Springfield, has been temporarily closed, a fifth and a sixth class will open in Boston and Lynn, respectively, during January, 1917.

This progress in providing suitable education for visually handicapped children is welcome. When contrasted, however, with the strides made in Ohio it is clearly far too slow. In Ohio "sight-saving classes" to the number of 13 have been established, — 6 in Cleveland, 3 in Cincinnati, 2 in Mansfield and 1 each in Toledo and Ashtabula. In Massachusetts we shall have, at the beginning of 1917, fewer sight-saving classes than in the one Ohio city of Cleveland. This contrast, puzzling at first sight, is easily explained. In Massachusetts, cities and towns must rely on their own resources,[1] — resources which in industrial centers are often inadequate to the needs of their schools. In Ohio this is not the case. There, local school boards draw on the State treasury for the full cost of educating their handicapped children. As any State suffers by allowing such children to grow up unsuitably educated, and therefore at times ultimately unemployable, and as it is probably the State's duty to equalize, as far as possible, the educational opportunities of its school children, no matter where they live, is not some move in the Ohio direction worthy of our consideration? If the Ohio system seems too burdensome for our State treasury, might not Massachusetts still assume the extra expense — and at the same time the supervision — of special public school classes for seriously handicapped children?

II.

Defective Sight in Public Schools.

To throw additional light on such questions as this, as well as to help individual children, our study of defective sight in public schools has been carried on, this year, in the following eleven cities and towns: Brookline, Marblehead, Needham, Newton, Peabody, Revere, Salem, Swampscott, Waltham, Watertown and Wellesley. We have thus been able to study the school vision records of over 26,000 children, and to get more accurate information about 267 of the more serious cases.

[1] Aided in certain instances by private generosity.

The results confirmed very strikingly our earlier conclusions. The proportion of school children with low vision[1] which we find this year in eleven cities and towns, the proportion with low vision neglected, and the proportion recommended for special sight-saving classes, all closely correspond to the proportions found in our previous studies.

TABLE I.

LOCALITY.	Year.	Pupils.[2]	Per Cent. with Vision $\frac{20}{40}$ or Less.	Per Cent. neither wearing Glasses nor examined by Experts.	Per Cent. recommended for Sight-saving Classes.
Lawrence, Springfield, Worcester, .	1914	48,507	4.1	3.2	.12
Cambridge, Lynn, New Bedford, .	1915	40,259	4.7	3.1	.17
11 cities and towns, ...	1916	26,164	4.1	2.5	.28

The facts as above summarized show that these cities and towns have, as a group, almost the same proportion of children with low vision ($\frac{20}{40}$ in both eyes, or less) as the cities previously considered, while the percentage of neglected children with low vision is slightly less. Our earlier conclusion, that at least .12 per cent. of Massachusetts school children have such visual defects as to require a modified form of education, is, moreover, fully confirmed; for this year, at least .28 per cent. of the children whose records we have examined[3] have since been recommended, by specialists, for transfer to sight-saving classes.

When considered locality by locality, the facts suggest further points of importance. Tabulated by place, according to the proportions of children with low vision lacking expert care, the conditions are as follows: —

[1] One-half normal or less, with glasses, in both eyes. This standard, lower than that adopted by the State Board of Education on the recommendation of the State Department of Health, has been used in this study so as to consider only those children about whom there can be no possible doubt that an expert examination is necessary.

[2] These figures, furnished by local school committees, omit high school and Grade I. pupils. As high school records were not everywhere accessible, they have been omitted everywhere for the sake of uniformity. Grade I. pupils are omitted because their vision is not tested.

[3] Omitting Revere, where our follow-up work is not yet complete enough to be reported.

TABLE II.

	Pupils.[1]	Per Cent. neither wearing Glasses nor examined by Experts.	Per Cent. with Vision $^{20}/_{40}$ or Less.
Totals,	26,164	2 5	4 1
Revere,	3,882	4 4	6 7
Salem,	3,396	4 4	5 8
Peabody,	1,906	3 4	4 5
Watertown,	1,746	2 7	4 7
Waltham,	1,891	2 4	4 1
Needham,	961	1 9	4 2
Swampscott,	900	1 6	3 0
Marblehead,	1,025	1 6	2 3
Newton,	4,985	1 5	3 3
Wellesley,	685	1 0	4 5
Brookline,	4,787	1 0	2 1

A glance at the above table is enough to suggest the close connection between neglect and the low vision of school children. On the whole, as neglect diminishes, — or rather as care is more faithfully exercised, — the percentage of low vision is reduced.[2] For instance, in Brookline, with 1 per cent. of neglected cases, we find only 2.1 per cent. of children with low vision; while in Revere, with 4.4 per cent. of neglect, we find 6.7 per cent. of low vision. The reason is obvious. Most children with defective sight need only glasses to give them normal or nearly normal vision; and even in cases of eye disease among children, low vision seldom results unless the disease is accompanied by neglect.

It is evident, from a second glance at Table II., that certain of these towns and cities have had unusually poor success in

[1] These figures, furnished by local school committees, omit high school and Grade I. pupils. As high school records were not everywhere accessible, they have been omitted everywhere for the sake of uniformity. Grade I. pupils are omitted because their vision is not tested.

[2] The one striking exception is Wellesley, where the excellent work of the school nurse has reduced to a low figure the percentage of neglect, but where an unexpectedly large percentage of low vision remains. This is probably due (1) to the very fact that through unusually thorough work practically all those exceptional children have been given expert care whose vision cannot be brought above $^{20}/_{40}$ by glasses, and (2) to the further fact that the total number of school children is so small that a difference of eight or nine cases is enough to make an exaggerated change in percentages.

remedying the neglect of their school children's eyes. While the average percentage of neglect, 2.5 per cent., is about what we have previously found, four cities and towns show a higher percentage. In fact, if two of these places, Revere and Salem, were omitted, the proportion of neglect for the group would be only 1.8 per cent. It is noteworthy in this connection that there is no school nurse in Revere; and that there is only one in Salem,[1] where proper following up of the public school children would really require two.

III.

Follow-up Work.

With the kind co-operation of the school boards and boards of health concerned, and with the help of school and district nurses, private societies, clinics, ophthalmologists and optometrists we have been able to secure the reports of specialists on a considerable number of school children with low vision. The epidemic of poliomyelitis last summer and autumn delayed the opening of the schools, and otherwise hampered our work. In spite of this we have been able to secure specialists' opinions on the same proportion of school children as last year. The total of 267 children examined by specialists have been recommended for schooling in accordance with their visual capacities as follows:—

Table III. — *Pupils examined by Experts.*

With School Vision Record.	Totals.	For whom Teaching is recommended in —		
		Regular School.	Defective Eye-sight Class.	Undecided.
20/40,	162	123	25	14
20/50,	60	40	12	8
Less than 20/50,	44	15	26	3
Uncertain,	1	–	–	1
Totals,	267	178	63	26

Among 267 children whose work or health would have been threatened by neglect of their eyes, 178 when examined and prescribed for by specialists had enough vision to continue

[1] The school nurse in Salem has so recently begun her duties that she is in no way responsible for existing conditions of neglect.

work in the public schools. In almost all of these cases, in fact, proper eyeglasses were all that was needed. On the other hand, at least 63 were judged[1] to need forms of instruction modified in such ways as to relieve their eyes.

IV.

The Demand for Sight-saving Classes.

If it had been possible to secure expert examination of all the children having either low school vision-records or difficulty in seeing their work, more who need special teaching would have been found. As it is, we can say with certainty only that the minimum demand — and a surprisingly large demand in certain places — for sight-saving classes is as follows: —

Table IV. — *Pupils recommended for Special Class.*

	Pupils.	Number.	Per Cent.
Totals,	22,491	63	.28
Wellesley,	685	8	1.17
Needham,	1,025	7	.68
Swampscott,	900	4	44
Watertown,	1,891	7	.40
Peabody,	1,906	6	.31
Brookline,	4,787	13	.27
Marblehead,	1,025	2	.19
Newton,	4,985	8	.16
Waltham,	1,891	3	.16
Salem,	3,396	5	.15

The percentages in the above table diminish with our information as to certain localities, rather than with their needs. In Salem, for instance, almost no follow-up work has been possible, while in Wellesley very few children with low vision remain to be accounted for.

About half a dozen of these cities and towns evidently have enough school children with seriously defective sight to warrant the establishment of separate classes. On further study the

[1] An unfortunately large number of these children had not been examined by any expert for two or more years, and needed changed eyeglasses or other treatment.

remaining places may or may not prove to need such classes. But in any case the most feasible solution of the problem in the smaller towns will probably be to arrange single classes for two or more adjoining towns, or to provide for sending children from towns to sight-saving classes in adjacent cities.

On the whole, our results in the towns which we know most thoroughly this year tend to confirm our last year's statement, based on a study of cities, that it is probably safe to say that not merely .12 per cent. but as many as .4 per cent. of the whole school population of the State require teaching in sight-saving classes.

V.

The Causes of Defective Eyesight.

The causes of low vision among the children recommended, in these cities and towns, for sight-saving classes may be summarized as follows: —

Table V.

	Totals.	Congenital Cataract.	Myopia.[1]	Hyper-metropia.[2]	Scars of the Cornea.	Miscel-laneous.[3]
3 cities, 1915, . .	68	5	25	22	8	10
10 cities and towns, .	63	5	11	21	11	15
Wellesley, . .	8	–	–	3	1	4
Needham, . .	7	2	–	5	–	–
Swampscott, . .	4	1	1	–	1	1
Watertown, . .	7	–	2	1	1	3
Peabody, . . .	6	–	1	3	1	1
Brookline, . .	13	1	3	4	4	1
Marblehead, . .	2	–	1	1	–	–
Newton, . . .	8	1	2	3	–	2
Waltham, . .	3	–	–	1	1	1
Salem, . . .	5	–	1	–	2	2

The proportions in which these diseases and defects appear as causes of low vision are much the same as last year, the most noteworthy difference being the smaller number of short-

[1] Including myopic astigmatism.
[2] Including hypermetropic astigmatism.
[3] Including albinism, amblyopia, injury, mixed astigmatism, nystagmus, etc.

sighted children recommended for sight-saving classes this year. Our totals, when added to those found in six cities during 1914 and 1915, are large enough to be still more significant.

TABLE VI.

	Totals.	Congenital Cataract.	Myopia.[1]	Hypermetropia.[2]	Scars of the Cornea.	Miscellaneous.[3]
Totals, . . .	197	11	50	62	31	43
Per cent., . .	100	5.6	25.4	31.4	15.7	21.8

It is especially noteworthy that in over 15 per cent. of these cases (scars of the cornea) good vision might have been preserved by proper hygienic conditions and medical care.

VI.

SCHOOL NURSES.

As pointed out in our two last reports, personal explanations to parents are necessary to secure expert examination for children with apparently defective sight. These personal explanations can best be made by school nurses or visitors. The supply of school nurses in most of our cities and towns is, however, inadequate. Their work for good eyesight is often inestimable. Without it parents too often fail to realize their children's difficulty; and unless they understand, their children cannot benefit by even the best and most freely offered expert opportunities. We must therefore ask again whether it is not time to consider the State's requiring of all cities and towns the assignment of at least one nurse or visitor to every 1,500 or 2,000 pupils. With no fewer can the problem of disease and of defective eyesight among school children be at all adequately met.

[1] Including myopic astigmatism.
[2] Including hypermetropic astigmatism.
[3] Including albinism, amblyopia, injury, mixed astigmatism, nystagmus, etc.

APPENDIX.

Exhibit at Panama-Pacific Exposition of Massachusetts Resources for the Blind.

APPENDIX.

REPORT OF EXHIBIT AT PANAMA-PACIFIC EXPOSITION OF THE MASSACHUSETTS RESOURCES FOR THE BLIND.

The Massachusetts exhibition of work for the blind was a co-operative effort of all the agencies for the blind in Massachusetts, arranged through the State Commission, and best described in spirit and outline by the wording on the frieze repeated over both the educational and industrial sections, as follows: "Massachusetts Resources for the Blind: Education — Employment — Recreation — Relief."

The relation of the organizations for the blind in Massachusetts to these important divisions of work was brought out in various ways against the background of a booth designed to attract by color, design and the motion of stereomotorgraph and multiplex display frame. The central opening in the glass screen of the booth divided it naturally into educational and industrial sections, both furnished with products of blind industry, ranging from mops and brooms to rugs and hand-woven art fabrics.

The preventive and educational aspects of the Massachusetts work were especially emphasized in the school section, through a wall display, including a large painting in color, giving a bird's-eye view of the new plant of the Perkins Institution and Massachusetts School for the Blind at Watertown, with photographic views of the buildings, showing blind children at school work and at play. The movement for prevention of blindness, which is of common interest to all Massachusetts agencies for the blind, was emphasized in this wall exhibit by two pictures, — one a touching procession of little blind children at the Boston Nursery for Blind Babies, with the following inscription: "The campaign for prevention of blindness has reduced the

percentage of admissions of Massachusetts children needlessly blind from ophthalmia neonatorum from 50 per cent. five years ago to 17 per cent. in the course of the past three years;" and a picture of the class for semi-sighted children in the Boston public schools, with the following inscription: "A class for children with seriously defective eyesight, Boston public schools. Among 1,875 children with defective sight, in three Massachusetts cities, only 412 had glasses or were under expert care. Many of these neglected children require teaching in such classes as this." In a glass cabinet the various appliances for the use of the blind for writing, reading and for games, embossed books, processes of making embossed diagrams for pupils, application of Montessori to pencil writing, were shown by the Perkins Institution. Chairs showing various forms of reseating done by the blind — rush, cane and pith — were also provided by the school, and through the stereomotorgraph, stereopticon slides emphasizing especially preventive and educational work were shown, many being beautifully colored. The story of preventive work in the case of needless blindness of the newborn, industrial accidents and other causes was graphically told through the stereomotorgraph, and was the special contribution of the Commission for the Blind. In this connection the co-operation of the State and local boards of health in the preventive work was shown in a map giving the activities of district health inspectors in investigation, advising and reporting to headquarters 2,034 cases of ophthalmia neonatorum outside Boston, 1913–14.

In the industrial section the co-operation of all agencies for the blind, public and private, was emphasized in a twenty-panel multiplex display frame, where, in conjunction with photographs, the individual aims and accomplishments of the various organizations were outlined with specific data as to their location, means of support, terms of admission, etc. Prevention of blindness as the common cause of all agencies was also reemphasized here. The most characteristic feature of this side of the booth, however, was the display of products of blind labor associated with photographs of the blind producers, and the demonstration of beauty, utility and merit of products of blind labor shown by actual service in the booth.

Gold medal awarded Massachusetts Commission for the Blind for its exhibit at the Panama-Pacific Exposition of Massachusetts Resources for the Blind.

Diploma awarded Massachusetts Commission for the Blind for its exhibit at the Panama-Pacific Exposition of Massachusetts Resources for the Blind.

Among the articles shown were products of both home and shop labor. Examples of home work shown in a glass cabinet included basketry, knitted and crocheted, hand and machine sewed, and cabinet work, all done by blind men and women in their homes. The blind carpenter who made the doll's bureau shown in the cabinet also made for the booth a sewing table at which visitors might sit to enter their names in the visitor's book. On the floor an old-fashioned braided rug, and a rug in oak-leaf colors woven on an oriental loom by blind labor, represented shop industries, while hand-woven Cambridge rugs were hung on the wall, and hand-woven art fabric draperies, of fine design and color, decorated the doorways and window-like spaces. The homelier products, such as mops, track brooms, house brooms, etc., were also exhibited, with descriptive material and photographs of the blind makers. In all, the labor of twenty blind adults was used in the furnishings of the booth, representative of the work of some two hundred blind men and women in Massachusetts who, through the activities of the State Commission, have work at home or in shops, depending upon the State and the public to find a market for their products.

This exhibit was further supplemented every afternoon, hourly — oftener if asked for — by representation in the moving-picture hall above in films furnished by Perkins Institution, Nursery for Blind Babies and Association for the Blind, showing blind persons at exercise or recreation at the nursery, school and Woolson House.